

Jackie Robinson Quotes

From the National Archives

What does Mr. Robinson mean by rightfully his or ours?

Explain what basic freedoms African Americans are missing.

Underprivileged - Not enjoying the same standard of living or rights as the majority of people in a society.

"Life is not a spectator sport." Describe what that quote means.

Baseball was just a part of my life. Thank God that I didn't allow a sport or business or any part of my life to dominate me completely... I felt that I had my time in athletics and that was it.

The right of every American to first-class citizenship is the most important issue of our time.

I don't think that I or any other Negro, as an American citizen, should have to ask for anything that is rightfully his. We are demanding that we just be given the things that are rightfully ours and that we're not looking for anything else.

I guess you'd call me an independent, since I've never identified myself with one party or another in politics. . . . I always decide my vote by taking as careful a look as I can at the actual candidates and issues themselves, no matter what the party label.

Civil rights is not by any means the only issue that concerns me--nor, I think any other Negro. As Americans, we have as much at stake in this country as anyone else. But since effective participation in a democracy is based upon enjoyment of basic freedoms that everyone else takes for granted, we need make no apologies for being especially interested in catching up on civil rights.

I won't 'have it made' until the most underprivileged Negro in Mississippi can live in equal dignity with anyone else in America.

Life is not a spectator sport. . . . If you're going to spend your whole life in the grandstand just watching what goes on, in my opinion you're wasting your life.

It is up to us in the north to provide aid and support to those who are actually bearing the brunt of the fight for equality down south. America has its iron curtain too.

Negroes aren't seeking anything which is not good for the nation as well as ourselves. In order for America to be 100 per cent strong--economically, defensively, and morally--we cannot afford the waste of having second-and-third class citizens.

I believe in the goodness of a free society. And I believe that society can remain good only as long as we are willing to fight for it--and to fight against whatever imperfections may exist.

1. Read the famous Jackie Robinson quotes above and discuss the meaning of each one. Students should rotate reading and sharing the quotes in their group. Students should then share what they think it was like for Jackie Robinson to be the first black American to play in the MLB.
2. Answer each of the following questions with a minimum 1 paragraph answer (5 sentences each):
 - Today are Blacks still experiencing discrimination in the area of jobs, education, and legal rights? Illustrate your response with concrete examples from data that you have researched. Explain your answer fully.
 - Is there still a need for special programs such as affirmative action when hiring blacks and other minorities? How does American society feel on this issue? Compare and contrast opposing viewpoints.
 - Have you ever been the victim of racism or discrimination by peers or by power-holders in our society (employers, schools, teachers, etc.)? Are there times that you are willing to share that you can identify yourself as the victimizer regarding racial discrimination? What were the feelings you experienced in either situation? What social causes may have been at work for you to be at the center of those experiences?
 - Will there ever be a time when Americans will resolve their history and become a “color-blind” society? Is it a desirable state of affairs to be totally “color blind” where race is concerned? In what instances (or under what circumstances) should Americans retain their racial identity?
3. When you are finished, each member of the group should share at least one of their essay answers.